THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M.K. PATIL) : (a) No, Sir. The State Government of Maharashtra is also making a monthly payment at the rate of Rs. 250/- per old age pensioner.

(b) The National Social Assistance Programme consisting of the National Old Age Pension Scheme and the National Family Benefit Scheme stands transferred to the State Plan alongwith the Annapurna Scheme with effect from the year 2002-2003. Funds are released to States by Ministry of Finance for all the three transferred schemes in a combined manner leaving the choice of the Scheme(s) to States in accordance with their needs.

(c) The funds released to the State of Gujarat under the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) during the years 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 were Rs. 320.92 lakh, Rs. 370.53 lakh and Rs. 338.63 lakh respectively and were based on the progress of expenditure by the State.

(d) With the transfer of the schemes, the States/UTs have flexibility in the choice, parameters and implementation of the transferred Schemes.

Economic activities of women of Andhra Pradesh

3539. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the women in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh have under the aegis of the UNDP's South Asian Poverty Alleviation Programme, been organizing themselves as Self Help Groups (SHGs) for reducing their poverty and attain economic prosperity by income generating activities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government would like to provide generous assistance to the State Government and encourage them to replicate the programme to other parts of the States and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU) : (a) and (b) UNDP's South Asian Poverty Alleviation Programme was under implementation in 20 mandals in three drought prone districts *i.e.* Kurnool, Mahaboobnagar and Ananthapur of Andhra Pradesh from 1995 to 2000. Under this Programme, emphasis was on organizing the rural women into Self Help Groups (SHGs) through the process of social mobilization, their training and capacity building and provision of

livelihood support to enable them to cross the poverty line through sustained generation of income. During the project period 5,201 Self Help Groups were organized consisting of 74,777 individual participants covering 56,000 households.

(c) The Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) which is being implemented as a major self employment programme in rural areas of all the districts of the country including Andhra Pradesh has similar approach and the emphasis is on organizing the families living below the poverty line into Self Help Groups, their training and capacity building and provision of income generating assets to enable them to cross the poverty line.

Loan to Andhra Pradesh by World Bank for Rural Poverty Reduction Project

3540. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the World Bank has agreed to provide Andhra Pradesh a loan of $150 million for the Rural Poverty Reduction Project during the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the various infrastructure and social sector projects on which the loan is likely to be utilised and the number of rural household the project is likely to cover?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL) : (a) Yes, Sir. (b) The Project, called the Andhra Pradesh Rural Poverty Reduction Project (APRPRP) covering 548 backward mandals and all coastal fishermen villages in 16 districts of the Andhra Pradesh, *viz.* Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Kurnool, Cuddapah, Nalgonda, Medak, Ranga Reddy, Khammam, Krishna, Prakasam, Nellore, Guntur, East Godavari, West Godavari and Visakhapatnam has been signed by the Government of India with the World Bank on 3rd April, 2003.

The total project cost is Rs. 1486.00 crores ($276.09 million) for a period of five years ending June 2008. The World Bank is supporting the project to the extent of Rs. 805.00 ($150 million). The balance of the cost is being met the State Government to the tune of Rs. 325.0 crores, commercial bank Rs. 282.0 crores and the target poor families Rs. 74.0 crores.